

Amendments to the Specification

[0018] FIG. 1 shows a pattern assembly 20 including a blade pattern 22 and a feeding passageway pattern 24. The blade pattern has a root portion 26 formed in the shape of the ultimate blade mounting root (that mounts/secures the blade to a separate disk which may be separately formed). The blade pattern also has an airfoil portion 28 extending from the root portion and formed in the shape of the blade airfoil. Proximate the tip of the airfoil (at the bottom of the pattern as oriented), the blade pattern has a grain starter portion 30. An upper portion 32 extends from a proximal end of the root portion 26. The blade pattern is formed by molding wax over a ceramic core. In various locations the core 40 is exposed (e.g., through an illustrated gap in the grain starter and protruding from recesses in the upper portion). In the illustrated embodiment, the blade pattern is supported by the grain starter portion atop the upper surface of a metallic support plate 44. The upper portion has a flat upper surface 46 which abuts the underside of a top plate (not shown) and coupled to the bottom plate by connecting rods (also not shown) to hold the plates registered in a parallel, spaced apart relation. The exemplary top and bottom plates are formed essentially as sectors of a larger circular plate (e.g., 120° sectors with rounded corners).